

Angie Hiesl Produktion: The making of *TWINS – how do I know I am me...*, 2009

[00:00:20] Angie Hiesl: My name is Angie Hiesl. I come from Cologne, which is the twin city of Liverpool, and we are very happy to be here to have had the opportunity to create a new piece out of *TWINS – how do I know I am me...* It is a performance and an installation at the same time, so we call the whole thing a project.

[00:00:43] The idea came about because I've grown up with identical twins – so my younger sisters are identical twins – which gave me an insight, and yet not a total insight, into this phenomenon, so it's always something that has been fascinating me, as well looking at other twins, but as well as at my twin sisters. It's something that remains always a mystery, questions... things that one still wants to find out about this theme.

[00:01:19] Now here, the same as we did in Cologne, we worked site-specifically. So, we had chosen The Furnace, which was offered to us as well as an option for a space, and we really liked it very, very much. So, we tried to adapt our piece, but at the same time, created new parts on the project, concerning as well the twins and the setting up of the location.

[00:01:59] I've been working together with Roland on this project on a very close basis. So, we work together on the installations; we work together on the performance; we work together on the choreographies. So, now we have established a language together and it's quite inspiring for the two of us, somehow, to, well... one has an idea that triggers off something in the other one, or we have a contradiction then we talk about it, then we say 'let's try it like this, let's try it like that,' and that's how we go about it now.

[00:02:39] We chose a number of identical twins. So, we work with them on a very personal level, finding out about their own lives and ways of being together in this very, very close partnership, one could say.

[00:02:53] What they bring is their own personality. So, we let us get inspired by that – as, them being twins, that's already the main, very important thing. So, it's not only the outer looks but then, as well, looking into a little bit their personality, their being.

[00:03:14] So, for example, Emma and Katy on the sofa - well, we somehow created the whole thing a little bit together with them, or just by the ways they do things and what they like to do. For example, reading the magazine, and one of them has written an article or is a writer in this magazine. So, we said 'Okay, brilliant. Let's have this magazine and let's have a telephone call between the two of them speaking about the article.'

[00:03:47] (the twins dance to a song by The Andrews Sisters) So this is for example one thing which came in, but then for example with Rebecca and Lisa, we asked them what hobby they had and they said they liked to dance, and we asked them what they would dance and they said salsa is one of the main dances, but then they attend some courses or they go out dancing on weekends. Then we said 'Okay what is it you dance? Just show us a little bit and bring music you like,' so they brought their own music and partly they worked on steps they wanted to do in the memory cube. So yes, this is something we did not want to impose on them but it was really going well together with the main structure that we had in the version in Germany because we had as well a dance after the game with the cards.

[00:04:56] With the other twins – for example Sandra and Diana – they are acrobats and they work in the vertical, so we worked with them, we created a whole sequence for them and with them here on the site, which was really great. As they have the ability of playing

piano, we created something around a piano. If they wouldn't have played the piano there would have been no piano in here.

[00:06:02] Zohal and Mursal, they are very new for us; we just got to know them in an audition we held in Cologne. And the shelving room, that was something of the half-divided room we created fairly new with them working here site specifically so we sent them out to buy the shoes, which is a reference to what we saw every Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening here, all the English ladies going around in incredibly high heels. This was one of the ideas we wanted to put into this piece in the shelving room.

[00:06:50] There are parts which are absolutely choreographed, so that is what we have given to Sandra & Diana and Alessandra & Viviana, the Italian dancers. So, there is a certain strictness about it and we worked on this very strong form. I think everybody is enjoying it, and the twins that have never been in a performance, for them of course, it's then another experience. It's the experience that the audience looks at them and they are part of a performance project, and at the same time as well, this aspect of meeting other twins. So, it was always, this time and as well on the first time when we did it in Cologne, the question: 'when are we going to meet the other twins?'

[00:07:31] I think none of them has ever worked in a piece only with other twins, without the twin couples. So already we were observing they were questioning one another how was it with you, how do you go about this or that, so that was quite interesting.

[00:08:36] [Emma Davies] I'm Emma

[Katy Davies] I'm Katy.

[ED] And we got involved because we don't really see each other because we've both got full time jobs and we thought it would be a team building exercise, to spend some time together.

[KD] And I suppose allow ourselves to have a bit more time to see how similar we actually are because we've always strived to be different.

[KD] But we have got another sister

[ED] We're triplets. So, I'm actually a twin with Sophie, who isn't here because she said she'd be embarrassed if anyone saw her, but I said well 'they'll think I'm you anyway so you should have just joined in.'

[KD] We've just been talking to two of the girls from Germany and they have got a slightly different attitude to being twins; they're a lot more confident in exploiting it and they've done load of productions and it's a nice little earner for them really.

[ED] Whereas we've always strived to avoid it, really.

[KD] There's been a few surprises along the way, where we've actually looked at each other and thought...

[ED] This is weird.

[KD] This is weird. Can you think of any examples off the top of your head? We can't actually see it each other from where we're going to be, but Emma once in rehearsals shouted to me, 'you're doing it wrong!'

[ED] And I couldn't even see.

[KD] And I was doing it wrong. But I said to Emma, 'how did you know I was doing it wrong?' Then we started laughing because we didn't actually know how we knew.

[00:10:51] [AH] Well there is one specific part in the project which is up in the upper room in this former office place. It's a projection with four twins, that means with two couples of twins, that almost look dead, those little creatures... they are children. This is a photograph mixing into another photograph of the entrance tower of the concentration camp in Auschwitz, in Poland now. So, this for us being Germans is very important because in Auschwitz, there was this terrible Doctor Mengele. He did a lot of experiments on identical twins. So, he was always standing there on the ramp when the wagons of the trains came. He even stood there in a white suit and didn't touch anything, didn't touch anybody, was just giving his signs, 'those over here, those over there, those to the other side.' He was taking out and selecting twins and maybe sometimes as well, mothers of twins, or maybe even a father of twins to get them into his laboratory, and what he did on them was really, really just pure cruelty in the name of medicine.

[00:12:16] So he was connected to a very well-known institute, which is now the Max Planck Institute in Germany, which in former times, well still has, this section of medicine looking into twins. But at that time he was supplying parts of bodies from his dead twins, and luckily there are a few twins who are still alive, who now live either in the USA or in Israel, and they have written about it and they have spoken about it. So, one knows about it and there are some photographs. So, this photograph of these twins – this is very well known - and we have got the opportunity from the museum in Auschwitz to use it, and for us being Germans, this is one aspect which has to do with twins which is a very, very negative aspect.

[00:13:20] Already my previous work always had to do with looking at something, with perceiving, so, with perception, with understanding, with perspectives. So, perspectives in both ways: let's say a way how you think about something and as well how things go together in space. So that's what we're working around. So, we want to leave the people free to go and to leave whenever they want to, so we're not somehow forcing them to look at only one aspect. They can go away if they want to have a look at something else.